FIRST COMICS

JUNE $1.25
NO. 8
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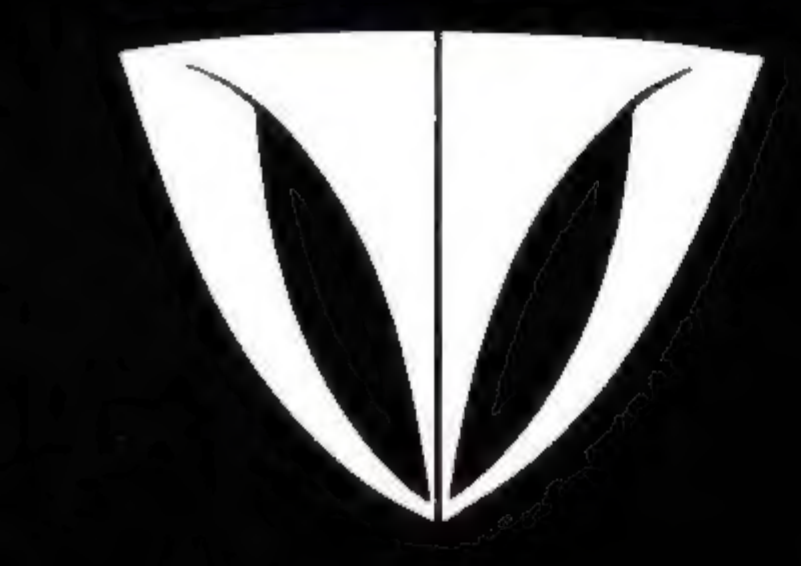
DYNAMO JOE

Special guest alien by
Phil Foglio

WHO ARE THESE GUYS, ANYWAY?



It is a new age, more than a thousand years hence, yet human nature has changed little. The forces and conditions that have bred wars in the centuries gone by now breed a different kind of war, a new breed of warrior. One of these new warriors is the robosoldier **Dynamo Joe**. This is his story.

Only three civilizations exist in our spiral of the galaxy, the greatest being the **Terran Confederation**, centered on Earth. The galaxy is shared with the cat-like **Tavitans**, and a benign master race, the **Imperium**.

The two man crew of **Dynamo Joe** consists of:

1) **Sergeant Elanian Daro**: citizen of the Imperium.

2) **Private Pomru**: a young Tavitan out to see the Universe.

Ten years before the start of this story, the planets at the Galactic rim fell under attack by a bizarre extra-galactic enemy called the **Mellenares** — millions of microscopic organ - isms linked together to form a single group consciousness, and possessing the ability to read minds. The foe moves at sub-light speeds, in an obsessive straight-line, devour - ing planets in its path.

LAST ISSUE: Daro gets a temporary field promotion to general, and **Spectre Squadron** leads the attack to save **Sigma Base** from a mutiny by **"Dreamers"** — civilians and miltary personnel who have succumbed to the mind control of the Mellenares. Having accomplished his mission, saving millions of lives in the process, Daro gets a well-deserved leave...

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

DYNAMO JOE™

<GREAT FLAMING HAIRBALLS, POMRU, AREN'T YOU FINISHED WITH THAT 'BOT YET?>*

<ALMOST, OVER-SERGEANT. JOE WAS PRETTY BADLY CHEWED UP BY THAT A.P.S. AND THIS WAS A FOOL'S GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE HIM.>

<THAT'S ANOTHER THING. I BEEN LOOKIN' OVER SOME OF THIS STUFF THAT YOU'VE BEEN SHOE-HORNING INTO THIS 'BOT, AND THERE AIN'T NO REASON FOR IT!>

<DYNAMO DUNG! MY INSTINCTS DON'T EVEN KICK OVER. DON'T PULL THAT STUFF ON ME!>

<WELL- er, MY INSTINCTS JUST TOLD ME TO PUT THEM IN, OVER-SERGEANT.>

Duel EX MACHINA

SCRIPT: PHIL FOGLIO
PENCILS: DOUG RICE
INKS: BRIAN THOMAS
LETTERS: L. LOIS BUHALIS
COLORS: RICK TAYLOR
EDITOR: RICK OLIVER

*TRANSLATED FROM TAVITANESE. --R.A.O.

<DAMNIT, POMRU, I DIDN'T HAVE NO COMPLAINTS WIT'CHA UNTIL YER PARTNER WENT OFF ON FURLOUGH, THEN PROPER PROCEDURE GOT SUCKED OUTTA THE AIRLOCK.>

<NOW I DON'T EVEN WANT TA KNOW HOW YOU GOT GENERAL IPPOLITOV TO GIVE YOU A FREE PAW TO RE-BUILD YOUR SUIT.>

<"BUT INSTEAD, WE'RE GETTING REPORTS ABOUT PILFERED SUPPLIES FROM ALL OVER THE BASE!">

<"AND LAST NIGHT, THE GENERAL HIMSELF WAS WOKEN UP AND TOLD THAT SOMEBODY HAD RIPPED OFF ONE OF THE NEW ABSOLUTE ZERO SUPER-COOLED COMPUTERS BEING TESTED DOWN ON T-DECK.">

<Oh THAT. WELL, I COULD RETURN...>

<"BUT WHAT ANNOYS ME IS--WITH YOUR REQUISITION PRIORITY CODE, YOU CAN GET DURN NEAR ANYTHING THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS.">

<"AND I FIND YOUR OLD, PERFECTLY GOOD COMPUTER IN THE TRASH!">

<HUMANS ALREADY THINK THAT TAVITANS ARE TOO FLAKEY FOR 'POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY.' YOU KNOW GENERAL IPPOLITOV HAS HIS EYE ON YOU. YOU AIN'T DOIN' YOUR PEOPLE NO FAVORS BY ACTING LIKE A RAVING KLEPTOMANIAC!>

<BUT I WANTED TO GET JOE FINISHED BEFORE THE SARGE GOT BACK. I NEVER THOUGHT...

<NO, YA NEVER DO THINK! YER ALWAYS RUSHIN' THROUGH YER WORK AND IT'LL MAKE YOU YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY! NOW I WANT YOU TO TEST THAT 'BOT AND DO IT BY THE BOOK... YA GOT ME?>

<YES, OVER-SERGEANT... GOING UP!?>

OVER-SERGEANT KAETO'S WORDS ARE SOON FORGOTTEN, HOWEVER, AS THE TESTS BEGIN...

OKAY, JOE, WE GOT OUR TEST CLEARANCE-- SO LET'S GOOOOOOO!

GREAT HONK! GENERAL *IPPOLITOV*, I'VE NEVER *SEEN* A DYNAMO SUIT MANUEVER LIKE THIS-- AND *LOOK* AT THOSE POWER LEVELS!

ASTOUNDING WHAT A LITTLE *PILFERING* CAN DO, DA?

Huh?

WELL, WE TOOK THOSE TURNS OKAY. THE STRESS INDICATORS ARE STILL GREEN, BUT I THINK THAT LEFT ENGINE COULD BE *RE-TUNED* TO...

Uh-oh... SOME-THING'S GONNA *HAPPEN*...

BREEP! BREEP!

THE RIGHT STABILIZER IS *HEATING UP*... WHY DIDN'T MY INSTINCTS TELL ME SOMETHING WAS BOLLIXED UP? *AND WHY ISN'T THE DAMN OVERRIDE KICKING IN?!*

THOOM!

THAT WAS AN EXPLOSION... WE'RE *HOLED!*

SHUT DOWN POWER TO SECTOR 3 AND... OH *NO!* I HAD THE OVER-RIDE SYSTEM *DISCONNECTED*. I FORGOT TO TURN IT BACK ON AND I *DIDN'T* INSTALL A SYSTEMS *CHECKLIST* IN THE NEW COMPUTER.

KAETO IS RIGHT... I *AM* MY OWN WORST ENEMY...

HOLD THAT THOUGHT...

...THERE ARE THOSE WHO'VE FOUND IT TO BE OF GREAT INTEREST.

CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, SPACE IS NOT EMPTY. BESIDES HYDROGEN, DUST AND RADIATION, IT IS POPULATED WITH EXTRA-GALACTIC MICROSCOPIC ORGANISMS --THE ENEMY OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE ORION WAR--THE MELLENARES.

THEY ARE A TELEPATHIC GROUP-MIND. WHAT ONE KNOWS, THEY ALL SHARE. THEY READ THE MINDS OF THEIR ENEMIES TO DISCOVER THEIR WEAKNESSES AND THEN FORM MONSTROUS SHAPES DRAWN FROM THE VERY FEARS OF THOSE THEY BATTLE.

A SCATTERED CLOUD OF THE CREATURES POURS IN THROUGH THE BREACH, AS ALWAYS, SCANNING FOR AN INTELLIGENCE UPON WHICH TO REACT.

300 X MAG

SOMETIMES, YOU TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET.

WELL, THE AUTOMATIC *REPAIR* SYSTEMS DID A GOOD ENOUGH JOB THAT I COULD RE-PRESSURIZE THIS SECTOR, AND THIS HOT-PATCH SHOULD *HOLD* UNTIL I GET BACK TO BASE, I'LL JUST HAVE TO COMPENSATE FOR THAT STABILIZER.

MY IN-STINCTS PROBABLY BEEN TRYING TO LET ME KNOW THAT I MESSED UP, BUT I'VE BEEN TOO BUSY TO PAY ATTENTION. *THAT'S* THE KINDA THING THAT GETS KITS *KILLED*, POMRU, OLD BOY...

IN BATTLE, THE MELLENARES USUALLY FORM GIANT WAR-MACHINES, COMPOSED OF BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CELLS.

HOWEVER ONLY A FEW HAVE MANAGED TO ENTER BEFORE THE BREACH IS SEALED.

WHOOOOOOOOOOO...

ONLY A FEW... BUT STILL ENOUGH FOR AN EXPERIMENT.

THIS WAR IS TRYING HARD ENOUGH TO GET THE SARGE AND ME KILLED ...IT SURE DON'T NEED ANY HELP FROM ME. WELL, I BETTER...

CLUNK...

RRRAAAHH!!!

GREAT BALLS OF FUR!!!

THAT WAS THE MAIN ROCKETS KICKING IN!

CONSARN IT, I MUST'VE *SHORTED OUT* MORE OF THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS THAN I'D THOUGHT...

I'D BETTER...

WARGH!

WHANGGG!

SCREEP!

HISSSS!

SCRAK!

ZOWNT!

RAAWLG!

WROWCH! EFT! OWSSSS!

Greeeeeee!

FITZ! CRACKLE! SPAK!

OH NO! THE TELEMETRY CONTROLS!

NYAK NYAK NYAK!

YOU LITTLE SCHNABBACRABBER... YOU MADE ME *DAMAGE* MY OWN 'BOT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU ARE, BUT IF THAT LITTLE BLAST IS ALL THAT YOU CAN DO TO ME...

Hnnnn?

I CAN FEEL FREE TO GRIND YOU INTO WASABI! **HAVEATCHA!!**

EEEBLE!

Ah-HA!

WHAT THE... WHERE'D IT GO?

YIARK!

WELL YOU JUST SIT RIGHT THERE, SPROUT...

'CAUSE I GOT YOU NOW!

WHANGNGNG!!!

A-heh...THE LITTLE BOOGER *CLOSED* THE HATCH...I GOTTA CALM DOWN...GOTTA *THINK*... WHAT THE HECK AM I DOUBLE-DEALING WITH HERE...IT...IT KINDA LOOKS LIKE A *MELLENARES*...AND IT KINDA LOOKS LIKE...*ME!*

"THE STERILIZER SYSTEMS WERE OPERATIONAL WHEN WE LEFT THE BASE...IT MUST'VE GOTTEN IN WHEN JOE WAS HOLED... BUT WHY DOES IT LOOK LIKE ME? IT MUST'VE *READ* ME WHEN I WAS THINKING ABOUT BEING MY OWN WORST ENEMY..."

IT'S TOO SMALL TO BE ABLE TO *KILL* ME DIRECTLY--BUT IT CAN STILL MESS JOE UP PRETTY BAD. GOTTA THINK...WHAT WOULD THE *SARGE* DO? AH-*HA!*

HE'D GO TO THE *WEAPONS LOCKER*, GET A BLASTER, AND...

EEEEE!

FOOM!

EEYYIKE!

FOOM! FOOM! FOOM! FOOM!

TREEEEEEE!

AND...AND THEN HE'D RETREAT!

HEY! THE *AIRLOCK!* MAYBE I COULD LURE IT IN AND BLOW IT OUT INTO SPACE, LIKE IN THAT CLASSIC OLD *MOVIE*, THE ONE THAT STARRED THE GREAT *JONES*...

YEAH, *YEAH*... NO, NO, WAIT A MINUTE...

THEN IT'D JUST BE BACK OUTSIDE... AND SPACE DOESN'T HARM THOSE LITTLE VACUUM SUCKERS--

--AND CONSIDERING MY TRACK RECORD TODAY, I'D PROBABLY *WRECK* JOE WHILE TRYING TO *GET* THE VARMINT.

BASH!

OOOOO!

BSSH!

uh-oh.

SMAT!

GRRRRR?

I... I DON'T GET IT... IT HAD A *GUN*, BUT IT DIDN'T *SHOOT* ME!

YOWR!

BUT I THINK IT JUST FIGURED IT OUT!

FOOM FOOM FOOM

THAT'S IT! IT DIDN'T FIGURE IT OUT... I DID! IT'S NOT INTELLIGENT... IT'S *READING MY MIND* TO FIND OUT HOW TO *FIGHT* ME!

I'VE GOTTA *STOP THINKING*, AND TRUST TO MY TAVITAN *INSTINCTS*. THE CLOSEST I CAME TO HITTING IT WAS WHEN I *INSTINCTIVELY* SWUNG AT IT IN THE CONTROL ROOM.

I DON'T THINK IT CAN *READ* INSTINCTS.

I'VE GOTTA *DISTRACT* IT SO I CAN GET OUTTA HERE.

I'LL JUST LET MY INSTINCTS GUIDE ME.

YAAAAAAH!

BRIGHTBLUEMOVEY-THINGALIVEALIVEOH!

FOOM!

GO!

CLEAR THE MIND...DON'T THINK...*CAN'T* THINK... THINKING'S FOR *COMPUTERS* ...WHAT?

WAIT A MINUTE... I'VE GOT THE NEW *ABSOLUTE ZERO SUPER-COOLED COMPUTER*... THAT CAN *SAVE* ME...

...IF THE CRITTER DON'T MESS UP ITS INSIDES ...WHY AM I THINKING LIKE THIS?!

Ptr?

POK!

THE ACCESS HATCH TO THE COMPUTER IS OPEN.. Oh NO...THAT GREEN GOBSTOPPER IS *INSIDE* THE COMPUTER!

AND... AND THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHAT MY INSTINCTS *WANTED* TO HAPPEN!

COMPUTER ON LINE AND POWER UP TO MAXIMUM!!

"COMPUTER SYSTEMS ACTIVATED."

SSSSSSS...

RAAAAGG!

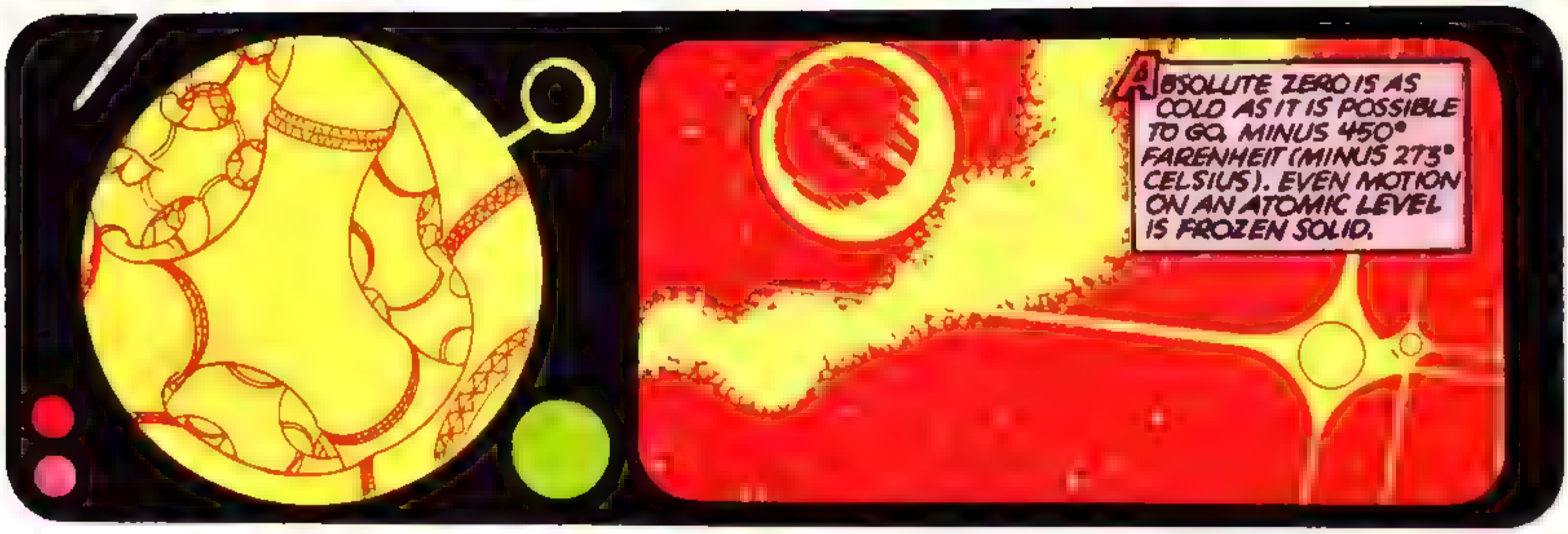
I GOTTA GET THAT ACCESS PLATE *CLOSED* BEFORE THE ENTIRE SUIT *FREEZES UP!*

YEOWW!

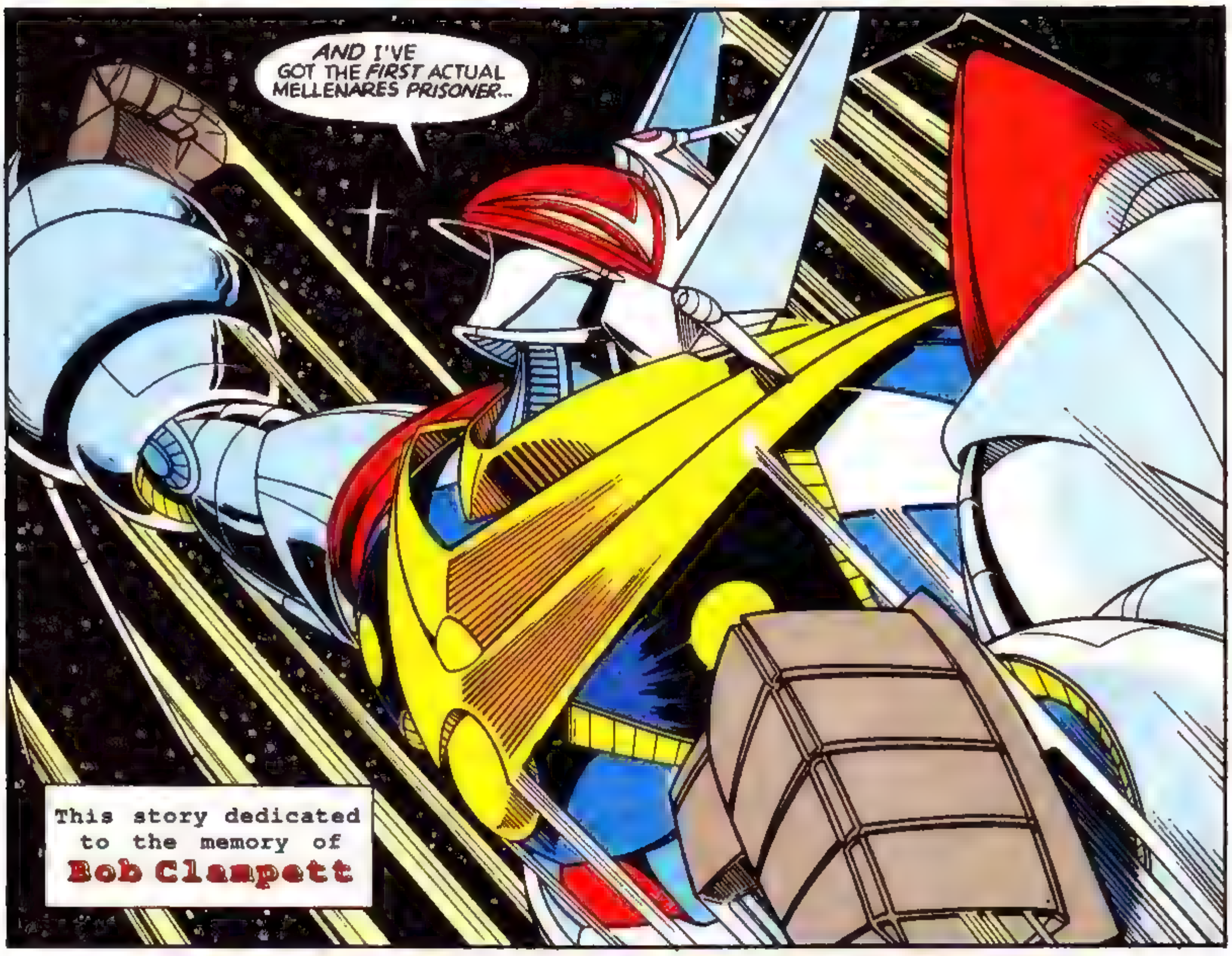
SSS CLANG!

HISSS...MY PAW! I THINK IT GOT JACK FROSTBITTEN!

BUT NOT AS BADLY AS *YOU* DID, YOU LITTLE GREEN SLIME IMPERSONATOR... YOU'RE *FROZEN SOLID*. I *DID IT!!*


ABSOLUTE ZERO IS AS COLD AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO GO. MINUS 450° FAHRENHEIT (MINUS 273° CELSIUS). EVEN MOTION ON AN ATOMIC LEVEL IS FROZEN SOLID.

I WAS ABLE TO BEAT HIM ONLY BECAUSE I WAS A TAVITAN AND FOUGHT IT USING MY TAVITAN INSTINCTS.


AND I'VE GOT THE FIRST ACTUAL MELLENARES PRISONER...
This story dedicated to the memory of
Bob Clampett

NEXT: P.O.W.

FRANCES, IS YOUR FATHER ALWAYS LIKE THIS? WHEN HE'S NOT MONOPOLIZING THE COMPUTER, HE'S TYING UP OUR RADIO.

YES, HE IS A LITTLE PREOCCUPIED-- BUT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH A COMPLEX WHEELER-DEALER LIKE CALUMET SMITH, IT'S BEST TO JUST LET HIM RUN. HE COULD BE ON TO SOMETHING BIG.

BIG?! HA! THAT DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE IT! THIS IS THE PROVERBIAL IT! THE MOTHER LODE! MY MAGNUM OPUS!

I THINK IT'S GOOD NEWS.

OKAY, SMITH, I'LL BITE. WHAT'VE YOU DONE?

I CALL IT THE BLACKBALL RUN!

WHAT?! BUT DAD, YOU ALWAYS SAID THAT THE RUN WAS IMPOSSIBLE!

Ah, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I KNEW ABOUT THIS WONDERFUL SHIP AND IT'S IMPOSSIBLY SUPERFAST ENGINE!

WILL YOU PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?

IT'S BEEN A DREAM OF MINE FOR YEARS--THE ULTIMATE TRADING RUN! WE BEGIN WITH A CHEAP CARGO, AND TRADE IT FOR A MORE EXPENSIVE CARGO. WHICH WE THEN TRADE FOR A MORE EXPENSIVE CARGO, AND SO ON AND SO ON. THE RUN NEVER STOPS.

WITH THE STAR OF MILWAUKEE, WE'LL BE ABLE TO COVER A TRADING TERRITORY UNDREAMED OF BY LESSER MINDS--UNTIL WE HAVE FINALLY TRADED OUR WAY UP TO A SINGLE CARGO THAT WILL MAKE US RICH! THE SECRET IS TO BE CONSTANTLY TRADING UPWARDS. IF WE EVER MISS A SHIPMENT, WE'LL BE WIPED OUT! IT'S A CHALLENGE, BUT WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO'LL EVER HAVE A SHOT AT IT. WHAT DO YOU SAY, CAPTAIN?

WELL... HOW LONG WOULD THIS RUN TAKE? SIX MONTHS?

SEVEN YEARS.

SEVEN YEARS?!!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, CLANTON. I'M TALKING ABOUT GOING FROM *NOTHING* TO *RICH!* RICHER THAN YOU CAN *IMAGINE!* FOR *THAT*-- YOU CAN WAIT SEVEN YEARS!

I SEE YOUR POINT. SO I'VE GOT SOME TIME TO WORK ON MY SHOPPING LIST. LET'S DO IT. WHERE DO WE *START*?

HERE...

CARBONADIS

...KHANLON STATION!

YOU MEAN THE ONE *FALLING APART* OUT THERE?

WHAT?!! RHUKYSER PROTECT US!! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE STATION?!

331406

PHIL FOGLIO - Script
PAUL GUINAN - Pencils
SAM GRAINGER - Inks
L. LOIS BUHALIS - Letters
RICK TAYLOR - Colors
RICK OLIVER - Edits

TM

KHANLON STATION--THE FIRST ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL TRADING POST BETWEEN THE KHANATE IMPERIUM AND THE TAVITAN'S HOME WORLD OF LONDREE. ALTHOUGH ANTIQUATED, IT IS STILL HEAVILY USED DUE TO ITS SUPERIOR LOCATION AND THE PRESENCE OF THE HOME-OFFICES OF SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR TRADING FAMILIES.

THE ALLIANCE SECURITY PATROL (AKA THE SPACE PATROL) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER AT ALL SPACEPORTS AND DOCKING FACILITIES. DUE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE ORION WAR, THEY ARE SERIOUSLY UNDERMANNED AND OVERWORKED. THEY THUS CONTINUE THE TRADITIONS OF ALL PREVIOUS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.
--MICHELIN'S GUIDE TO THE ALLIANCE

ATTENTION STAR OF MILWAUKEE-- HEAVE TO AND PREPARE FOR INSPECTION.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

34

"WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MY JOB, IS THAT I GET TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS."
--Dr. Victor Von Frankenstein.

I HOPE THEY DON'T *DELAY* US TOO LONG.

WE COPY, PATROL, WE ARE EQUIPPED WITH A GONDOLA 300 DOCKING SYSTEM. PLEASE ADJUST SYSTEMS ACCORDINGLY, OVER.

THANK YOU, STAR. WE ARE BEGINNING DOCKING SEQUENCE. PLEASE PREPARE TO SLAVE ALL AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS TO OUR CONTROL, OVER.

DOCKING COMPLETE. ALL READINGS ARE GREEN. PLEASE REPORT ABOARD WITH MANIFESTS AND COMPUTER CODES. OVER AND OUT.

CENTRAL LOCK

ENTERING ZERO GRAVITY FIELD

CAUTION

HELLO, CAPTAIN. I'M CALUMET SMITH, CARGO COMPTROLLER FOR THE STAR. WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO THE STATION? WE'VE GOT AN *ORDER* TO TO PICK UP THERE!

GOOD LUCK. WE'VE HAD AN *ACCIDENT*. AN ORE CRUISER SOME-HOW MANAGED TO SMASH RIGHT INTO A FUEL CELL. THE STATION'S BEEN *KNOCKED OUT* OF ITS *ORBIT*.

PRESSURE SUITS

EMERGENCY USE ONLY

IT SHOULD BE HITTING *ATMOSPHERE* IN ABOUT *TWO HOURS*. WHICH IS ALL THE TIME WE'VE GOT TO *EVACUATE*.

GONE?! WHY, THE ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS TO...

OUR CARGO...

RIGHT! IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN MAKE OUR PICK-UP?

DEPENDS, WHO'S YOUR *SHIPPER*?

LONDREE EXPORTS.

OH, *LURP'S* OUTFIT. I THINK HE PLANS TO JUST LET IT BURN AND TAKE A *WRITE-OFF*.

WELL...

WHY... THAT MEANS IF WE CAN GET TO IT--IT'S *SALVAGE!*

WRONG!!

TERIYAKI LURP!

THASS RIGHT, CALUMET, YOU LOW-DOWN WEASEL DEALER! THAT CARGO YOU WANT *ISN'T* SALVAGE--IT'S PROPERTY OF LONDREE EXPORTS...AND *WILL* BE UNTIL IT BOILS AWAY.

BUT BY *LAW*, ONCE IT'S BEEN *ABANDONED*...

BUT IT *AIN'T* ABANDONED! I KEPT THE PLACE *OPEN*, JUST FOR YOU--BUSINESS AS USUAL!

WHAT?! BUT *HOW?*

I'VE GOT ME AN *EXECUMEK 6400* OFFICE MANAGER, AND HE'S STILL THERE WAITING FOR YOU. THE *INSURANCE* WILL COVER IT AFTER THE STATION CRASHES. SO YOU GOT TO PAY ME *FULL PRICE* FOR THAT CARGO. PLUS A FEW LITTLE *EXTRAS* I'M SURE YOU'LL APPRECIATE.

CAN HE *DO* THAT?

AFRAID SO.

KENDALL

STORAGE FEES? DOCK MAINTENANCE FEES?! LOADING FEES!! THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS!!!

DON'T FORGET THAT I CAN HAVE THE ROBOT *BURY* THIS CARGO. SO DEEP IN STORAGE THAT YOU'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO PULL IT OUT IN TIME. SO TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT!

I...WE'LL TAKE IT.

WELL, THERE IT IS. IT WOULD'VE *BROKEN UP* IF THEY'D TRIED TO *TOW* IT.

ACCORDING TO SMITH, LURP'S LITTLE EXTRA CHARGES WILL ADD ABOUT A *YEAR* TO OUR RUN.

WE DIDN'T HAVE *TIME* TO ARGUE WITH HIM--THIS THING WILL BE HITTING ATMOSPHERE PRETTY SOON.

THANKS. YOU TWO READY?

CAPTAIN

SPECIALIST

I'LL SWING THE CARGO BAY AROUND. LET ME CHECK YOUR SUIT SEALS.

CLOSE ENOUGH, MON CAPITAN. LET'S DO IT!

LADY OF SPACE--WHAT A MESS! THE CLOWN WHO HIT THIS PLACE MUST'VE BEEN COMING IN AT ALMOST FULL SPEED!

HOLD UP--I THINK I SAW SOMETHING MOVING IN THERE. I'M GOING TO HIT THE LIGHTS.

Oh-IT'S JUST THE ROBOT. YOU'RE WITH LONDREE EXPORTS?

CAPTAIN

YES, SIR. I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF MOVING YOUR ORDER UP OUT OF STORAGE.

I HAVE ANTICIPATED YOUR WISH FOR EXPEDIENCY.

THAT WAS THE STATION'S FIRST SKIP THROUGH THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE. WE'VE GOT TO GET MOVING!

LOOK! THE ROBOT'S TRAPPED! C'MON, HELP ME GET HIM OUT!

UMMPH! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I REMAIN FULLY FUNCTIONAL, SIR. BUT YOU NEED NOT HAVE BOTHERED. I *AM* JUST A ROBOT, YOU KNOW.

WELL I... WE JUST COULDN'T LEAVE YOU... TRAPPED THERE.

I SEE. WELL, THANK YOU, MADAM. I AM RELIEVED THAT I WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY A FULL AND SATISFYING RETIREMENT.

OH... YEAH.

IF YOU TWO ARE QUITE FINISHED...?

COMING, CAPTAIN!

HEY, CAPTAIN-- WHAT IS THIS STUFF ANYWAY? I'VE NEVER SEEN PACKAGING MATERIAL LIKE THIS.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE; I DON'T THINK YOUR FATHER DOES, EITHER. YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THIS PACKAGING THOUGH. I DON'T THINK ANY OF THESE THINGS ARE DAMAGED AT ALL.

WELL, I'LL BE... HEY, CAP'N, LOOK AT THIS SYMBOL! I'VE SEEN IT ON SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT ON THE STAR! SOME OF THE REALLY WEIRD STUFF WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT YET.

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF 'EM. WELL, THIS IS THE LAST ONE--LET'S GO. THANKS FOR YOU'R HELP, uh, ROBOT.

THANK YOU FOR DEALING THROUGH LONDREE EXPORTS, SIR. YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A COMPLIMENTARY SIDEREAL CALENDAR, AND Mr. LURP HAS AUTHORIZED ME TO OFFER YOU A *DISCOUNT* ON ANY AVAILABLE OFFICE FURNITURE.

I DON'T THINK THAT WE...

WAIT!! I CAN USE SOME OFFICE FURNITURE!

LATER...

WELCOME BACK, CAPTAIN CLANTON. YOU CUT IT MIGHTY CLOSE THERE.

THANK YOU, PATROL. WE ARE READY FOR BOARDING.

WELL, CALUMET, HOW'S YOUR CARGO?

NO PROBLEM, TERIYAKI. ALL 50 CRATES IN *PERFECT* CONDITION.

GOOD. NOW *PAY UP.*

HERE YOU GO.

WELL, *YOU* SAID IT WAS "BUSINESS AS USUAL" AT YOUR OFFICE--SO I JUST WROTE YOUR OFFICE MANAGER A *CHECK*. HE PUT IT ON YOUR *DESK*.

WHAT THE... THIS HERE'S ONE OF *MY* RECEIPTS... *IT SAYS YOU ALREADY PAID? ...IN FULL??!*

WHY YOU LOW-DOWN, DOUBLE-DEALIN'...

KENDALL

CAN HE *DO* THAT?

AFRAID SO.

KENDALL

AND SO...

I DIDN'T THINK A TAVITAN COULD GET THAT *MAD.*

I *WAS* TEMPTED TO JUST WALK AWAY AND LEAVE HIM WITH NOTHING.

Star of Mi

AND LURP KNEW I COULD'VE DONE IT, TOO. SO WHEN I OFFERED HIM OUR *ORIGINAL PRICE,* HE *HAD* TO TAKE IT--AND SMILE!

I THINK HE ALMOST LOST IT WHEN YOU TOLD HIM YOU WERE *DEDUCTING* THE AMOUNT YOUR BANK WILL CHARGE FOR STOPPING PAYMENT ON THE CHECK!

SO HOW'D IT GO? I'M SORRY I HAD TO MISS IT.

GREAT! TERRIFIC! JAZZ'S IDEA WITH THE CHECK WORKED LIKE A DREAM!

WHOA! I CAN'T TAKE *ALL* THE CREDIT...

ANYBODY COULD'VE DONE IT...WITH THE PROPER *OFFICE EQUIPMENT!*

AND NOW WE'VE GOT SOMEBODY WHO CAN DO THE BOOKS!

SIGH YOU KNOW, RUSSEL, THESE THINGS *NEVER* HAPPENED ABOARD THE SEVEN SISTERS.

NEXT STOP THE KHANATE!!

Dear Tabby

C/O FIRST COMICS
435 N. LASALLE
CHICAGO IL 60610

Hey Joe:

Well, it's sacrifice time. My bank account's been com - plaining, and that means I have to drop some, shall we say, "nonessential" comics. Don't worry, though, you're safe... for now. For a long time, if you keep up the quality of issue #4. (Okay, I'm a little behind in my reading. *You* try to go to college full-time and work and run a club and support a computer hobby and entertain friends, and then keep up with your comics. You do? Oh. How about the guy next to you?)

In my opinion (don't worry, I know this isn't that new editorial column of DC's), there are two people who can claim the title of best comic book writer. One is Alan Moore, of course, and the other is the infamous, unsung Phil Foglio. Although Phil's at his best with his own artwork complementing his writing, he's no slouch in the scripting-alone department, either. He'd be my first choice to work on my "Paraverse" project with me (when I get around to doing it), but I'm sure he's busy enough. Oh well.

I'm not usually a fan of back-up features, so when I saw the main story chopped for Cargonauts, I thought, "This better be good." Of course, it was. How could I doubt Phil? Anyone who can produce something like *Buck Godot* (plug, plug) can't go wrong. (Well, maybe he can, but I'd have to see it to believe it.) Did I grovel enough, Phil? Can you give me my money now?

P.S. For a lettercol name, try "Mail 'n' Airs."

David Alan Wright
404 Park St., 3rd Floor
New Britain, CT 06051

*Since you already gave **Phil Foglio** the plug for his ex - ceedingly funny* Buck Godot *graphic novel, I won't bother to say anything about it. Except what I just said.*

*But to give credit where credit is due, DJ creator **Doug Rice** works very closely with Phil on the plots for every issue of **Dynamo Joe**, as well as providing input on the back-up series. Cargonauts penciller **Paul Guinan** also gives a helping hand on the plotting of that feature. In short, **Dynamo Joe** is a true collaborative issue.*

As a matter of fact, Phil lends a hand on the art this issue with the design and rendering of the "guest alien."

*And while we're on the subject of plugs, I also think **Phil Foglio** and **Alan Moore** are terrific writers, but my vote for best comics writer goes to **Mike Baron,** co-creator and writer of both **Badger** and **Nexus.** If you haven't read either of these books, go out and buy all the back issues today! You won't regret it.*

Dear Tabby:

After reading L. Green's letter in DJ #5, I can only summarize that he/she is a religious watcher of "Voltron."

I can answer his questions in three deft strokes:

1) Do you have room for laser projectors under *your* skin? The DJ battlesuits (the actual robots) were probably designed for mobility and ease of movement, with the blaster mounted ex - ternally, as they wanted the suits finished A.S.A.P.

2) The Dynashields were placed for quickness (I guess) in battle. If a Mellenares swung a tentacle at you, you wouldn't want to waste your 0.5 seconds of reaction time fumbling for a shield on your back.

3) Well, let's tear apart "vibra - sword." What we have here is a *vibrating* sword, right? As such, it has no reason to emit light.

P.S. The Wolf-1 is a bitchin' battlesuit! Keep it around (though I'm not thrilled with the internally mounted weapons).

Bill Stiteler
669 Belmont Ave.
Mansfield, OH 44906

I printed L. Green's letter because I thought he raised some interesting questions — and you have provided some interesting answers.

But what I think is most interesting is the fact that nobody writes in to say, "Hey, how come your robot is designed to look just like a giant human-type guy? Why not make him look like a big Buick? Or a breadbox?"

*The answer is supplied in **Dynamo Joe Special** #1, in which it was stated, "the Dynamo-class battlesuits were created — humanoid in form to be adaptable to a wide variety of environments." Artistic license aside, this also explains the externally mounted armaments — they are mounted externally so they can be removed and replaced easily, making the battlesuits highly adaptable.*

As for Wolf-1's "internally mounted weapons," there's a reason for that, too. A very special and revealing reason. But this isn't the place to talk about that.

Dear Pomru:

I'll be brief. I read issue #5, and now I've decided to write in my thoughts and advice. There are a few points that either disturbed me or I just wanted to talk about.

1) The Galax-Cs are just a little too much for me to deal with. I like the idea, but the way they looked gives me gas. Something about the head shape, or the coloring, or something. That's just a minor concern.

2) The Cargonauts strip is taking up a lot of space and leaving the stories hanging. Is it really necessary to put that story in. I'd rather wait and read more Joe at once than read a little bit every month.

3) Lastly, one letter in the lettercol in #5 was, well, just too bad. The thought of a glowing sword makes me shudder. That, and then Joe can turn into an airplane, or a dinosaur, and they can save the princess from the evil horde that is trying to rule the universe. Dynamo Joe is the only bot around that doesn't change into a toaster, or carry a blazing sword, or shoot missles out of his eyebrows.

The Dynamo-class suits are

the grunts. They're mean. If Joe ever carries an "electro blade" or has a "photon punch" or something, it will be a sad day. The "grit your teeth and go in with your fists flying" Joe is much better, and the only thing that separates Joe from every other "toy comic."

I was also curious as to the fate of the original face of the Dynamo-class robots. Is this a permanent change, or is it due to the switch from land armor to deep-space armor. Also, why change the shields. The old shields were cooler, although I was never clear as to where they were stored. The new shields seem cumbersome and in-effective.

Despite all this "constructive criticism," please keep up the good work. I love Dynamo Joe!

Aaron Brownlee
134 King St.
Burlington, VT 05401

Like Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," we were having a hard time explaining why the Dynamo suits had these curious smiles on their faces while being attacked by grisly, tentacled, extragalactic monstrosities — or, for that matter, why they had faces at all. Other modifications may come and go, but I doubt you'll be seeing the happy face again.

As for Cargonauts, we've finally figured out a way to give you 26 pages of ***Dynamo Joe*** *every month, with no back-up feature. Cargonauts will end in issue #11, and DJ will go full-length with issue #12.*

Dear Tabby:

I would like to congratulate you on a job well done on the Dynamo Joe series. The comic book is great. I love the story, the characters, the artwork... everything! Doug Rice is a genius. The idea of using a giant robot as a common soldier to fight in a war against a mysterious and unknown enemy is a masterpiece. Dynamo Joe has captured the Japanese tradition of the giant robot genre.

I must confess that when First Adventures came out, I ignored it since I didn't know what it was about. When I saw Dynamo Joe on the cover of issue #3 I was curious. When DJ was on the cover of issue #5 my curiosity peaked, so I picked it up and skimmed through it. By the time I had finished, I was hooked! I bought Mars #10-12 and First Adventures #1, 3, and 5. (unfortunately, my comic dealer didn't have anymore copies of issue #4 and #6.) Then came the three-issue limited series, and I was hoping (and praying) that Dynamo Joe would return in his very own regular series.

I guess someone up the heard me because my prayers were answered... I think. You see, my comic dealer did not have issue #4, and on top of that in the letter column of issue #5 you have a "Dynamo Joe reader's digest" which states that there is a Dynamo Joe Special #1 and that DJ appeared in Grimjack #30. I didn't even know about this. So altogether I am missing five Dynamo Joe comics. I talked to my comic dealer and he is going to order these five issues (I get the feeling he has an "if you missed the issue, it's too bad" type of attitude), but he said these issues were "near impossible to get."

Missing these five Dynamo Joe issues is driving me absolutely nuts! I am going bald tearing my hair out, and I can't sleep at night anymore. Please help!

Terry Bettas
251 Avenue Road
Kingston, Ontario
Canada K7M 1C4

*It's always a big surprise to me when I hear that people can't get back issues of our comics — particularly issues that were barely two months old when you tried to find them (***DJ Special** *#1,* ***DJ*** *#4 and* ***Grimjack*** *#30). Retailers should be able to re-order books with relative ease from their distributors. There seems to be some widespread rumor that you can't re-order First Comics. This is not only not true, but we have also changed our re-order policy to make it even easier for retailers to get more copies of our books when they run out.*

If your local retailer is disinclined to re-order or obtain back issues or stock enough issues to meet demand in the first place, you might try calling us direct at 312-670-6770. While we don't normally sell comics directly to the general public (except with subscriptions), we might be able to make an exception for somebody who wants more than one or two comics.

Don't be too hard on your retailer. While we think it would be great if all retailers stocked back issues in mass quantities in order to encourage new readers to buy comics they may not have purchased in the past (without having to start in the middle), it is not economically feasible for some retailers to do so.

And don't lose too much sleep — you're not missing as many issues as you think: The ***DJ Special*** *was a reprint of the DJ stories from* ***Mars*** *#10-12 (with some cool schematics and other extras), and there was no* ***First Adventures*** *#6.*

NEXT MONTH: With the help of Pomru's P.O.W., the Alliance finally begins to unravel the secrets of the enemy. But what they discover could kill them! By **Phil Foglio, Ben Dunn**, and **Brian Thomas**. And Cargonauts by Foglio and **Paul Guinan.**

— Rick Oliver